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Rupture and continuity

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- 1 Revolutions come and go in Hungary, a country whose population and literary and political elites cherish its revolutionary tradition. These are events in the national history that the Hungarians invest with pride. There is no rupture in the spirit of revolution, it seems, but revolutions are set in a historical continuum. At each revolutionary moment, the spirit of a choice of previous revolutions is evoked. Paradoxically, then the idea of a rupture that revolution presents becomes a continual element in Hungary.
- 2 While one could discuss the significance of this in the cultural life of Hungary and the understanding of history, whether we might term it history consciousness, knowledge of the past, or the cultural history of the present, this study looks at the significance of revolutions in contemporary politics in Hungary. Yet, as politics in Hungary has been heavily focused on cultural identity building, political articulation has its effects on the cultural life of the country and especially government sponsored productions and commemoration. Discussing ruptures and continuity in the Hungarian revolutionary tradition, the paper thus deals with politics of memory.
- 3 Twenty years after the first free elections in Hungary, the ethos of revolution is still present in the country. The year of that shook Eastern Europe as much as the West, 1989, was marked by events, which were related to a range of the previous revolutions. Revolution, however, was very much present in the rhetoric of the Hungarian right during the election year 2010. The paper seeks to discuss the way in which revolution – or revolutions of 1989, 1956, and 1848 – have been present in contemporary Hungarian politics.
- 4 In particular, the focus is on the articulation of the revolution by Fidesz. While in government 1998–2002 it related to the above mentioned revolutions in building their political discourse and project. This paper looks at the speeches of Viktor Orbán the leader of Fidesz, the largest party in Hungary, which took landslide victories in both the parliamentary elections in April 2010 and local elections in October 2010. This is why such

an endeavour in recent political history is also vital for present evaluations of Fidesz politics, policy, identity and politics of memory.

- 5 The paper investigates the ideological traces in this articulation. It looks at the way in which incoherent sets of contested concepts are adopted as part of a party discourse, using a discourse theoretical framework developed by Ernesto Laclau¹.

Revolutionary tradition

- 6 To get a grasp of a claimed “revolutions” of the present, one must know the ruptures of the past, their hierarchies and political baggage. Revolutions have been key objects of political rhetoric throughout the history of Hungary, and different political forces have been investing certain political meanings and evaluations to them. Thus, in the present, they evoke the values, they have been invested upon. At each moment of articulation, the meaning and values of the revolution are reassigned in novel ways. Yet, if we made a chart that captures some of the significations of the revolutions at given moments and ownership, it could be outlined as follows:

Figure 1. Revolutions and their reference

1514	Peasant Revolution of György Dózsa	Especially important 1949-1989
1848	Spring of Nations	All parties claim different heroes
1919	Soviet Republic of Béla Kún	Especially important 1949-1989
1956	Revolution against Soviets of Imre Nagy	After 1990 mainly Hungarian left/liberals
1989	Revolution against State Socialism	Some argue was not a revolution

- 7 As the chart shows, revolutionary tradition has also been a key nodal point in the discourse of the Hungarian Socialists at all eras. Each party would choose their icons from the canon of the heroes of the revolution 1848: this is how they could frame the meaning of that revolution in their own liking. Revolutionary heroes have their own meanings and following. In another context I have been discussing the way in which the liberal Mayor of Budapest (1990-2010), Gábor Demszky gave speeches on a day celebrating 1848 revolution, the Spring of Nations in Hungary, by the statue of the revolutionary poet Petöfi, and outlined the political situation and the direction of his politics, including relationships to other parties². Similar affinity to a chosen hero can be witnessed in other political parties and by other politicians³.

Poststructuralist method

- 8 This essay follows a poststructuralist methodological thinking, which is crucial for understanding the way in which meanings of the ruptures and continuities are made. It starts, drawing from structural linguistics, from the presupposition that any revolution is a signifier invested with meaning, whose meanings do change over time. Furthermore each meaning is relational. Yet, these structures are rearticulated, connections made,

renewed and broken in each moment of articulation. They are articulated by different actors and during different periods. As Jacques Derrida has demonstrated, the readings or reception of these articulations varies independent of the author's original intentions⁴. What follows from this, is that for a researcher interested in the political aspects of this meaning-making process, there are a number of interesting issues to be studied.

- 9 The discourse theoretical approach proposed by Ernesto Laclau and his colleagues, otherwise named ideology and discourse analysis, has developed sets of analytical tools drawing from the structural linguistics, literary, deconstructive and psychoanalytical traditions⁵. Signifier, for Laclau, refers to a moment when a concept is overloaded with meaning that its own particular meaning becomes diluted or overshadowed by all the other reference points⁶. By no means would it be empty. Rather the opposite, it is filled with all kinds of particular meanings. Yet, its tendential emptiness or potentiality to carry all the weight of the signified elements, offers a possibility for a specific kind of articulation: bringing together a number of elements under a single header. Thinking with our case in question, thus, revolutions may signify many relatively different things – or act as shared points of identification for a wide range of groups and people with different views or reasons to identify with it. Maintaining such a multifaceted references is not easy, however, and observing politics of meaning making one observes the potential collapse of such empty signifiers as well as their emergence and maintenance.
- 10 Sometimes the words we use do not appear to be empty, but their meanings change depending on their use or users. 'Floating signifiers' offer another perspective: they indicate the way in which meanings of a given signifier are being competed over. Two or more groups may propose an alternative reading of a revolutionary event, for instance. They could also offer differing moral evaluations of the event. The 'floating' captured by this analytical tool, implies that the signifier is tied to two different discourses, where its meaning would be structured around different sets of elements. An element, such as revolution, could be seen as both floating and empty depending on the issue which one wants to clarify with this usage⁷.
- 11 This paper does not discuss what constitutes a revolution or whether a given event in Hungary was a revolution or not. It discusses how revolution, rupture and continuity are used as rhetorical tools in political argumentation. What are the ranges of meanings they evoke or contest? What is their function in the course of the political events? Yet, it may be worthwhile noting that Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau's writings have emphasised the way in which revolutions are more events of continuity and illusions of rupture than commonly thought – especially in the (post-)Marxist framework where they have been drawing from. We may return to this at the end of the paper.

Postcommunist politics: “revolution” of 1989

- 12 The year of 1989 was supposed to present a new start for Hungary, the ultimate rupture from the previous era. National flags with a hole cut to remove the Soviet-style emblem were visible symbols that represented the break from the communist era. For the first time in Hungary a non-authoritarian and non-communist regime was established. Nevertheless, the revolution in 1989 was in many ways not a rupture but a continuum.
- 13 It was a “refolution”, as Timothy Garton Ash famously named the negotiated revolutions in late 1980s Central Europe that more resembled reforms⁸. The changes had been under

way throughout the 1980s. The ruling party was dominated by reformists who were eager to retain power but pushed through economic and some political reforms. Dissident groups were included in the round-table talks, and organised later into political parties. This brought in an element of continuity to the newly established political system and party differentiation.

- 14 Furthermore, the year of 1989 was termed as marking the “return to nationhood”. Especially nationally focused dissident groups claimed that expressions of nationhood were not allowed under the foreign rule. Now, finally national feelings could be expressed. Foreign yoke was gone. Hungary was free. As George Schöpflin explained, “the task of the new nationally minded government was to act as protectors of the Hungarian nation, regardless where its members lived”⁹. One of the issues that emerged was the situation of ethnic Hungarians living in the neighbouring countries, and this the first Hungarian government of József Antall focused upon in 1990-1994. As patriotism has been emphasising civic pride in the socialist state, ethnic pride was seen as a problem. Return to nationhood was a return of ethnicity. In extreme cases and for some, this was not unlike a return to the interwar period’s calls of unification of the Hungarian lands (irredentism of the extreme right).
- 15 The events of the year 1989 was also a moment of celebration of the heroes of the failed revolution of 1956, the moment when the change hoped for and anticipated in 1956 could finally happen: the restoration of shattered dreams of democracy. This was symbolised in the numerous spontaneous memorials and tombstones but also in the official celebrations and reburials. The most notable of the reburials was that of Imre Nagy, the PM of the reform government of 1956, whose legacy was claimed by the political forces of 1989¹⁰. A young student, Viktor Orbán, delivered a memorable speech at the reburial of Nagy. He has been the sole top-rate politician who has made it through 20 years of postcommunism and returned to the post of the PM of the Hungarian government in 2010.
- 16 Ultimately, the events of 1989 were seen in a larger continuum of Hungarian revolutions. They were not a sudden, exceptional rupture, but part of a national tradition. Their status as revolution has been put in question by political forces. In any case, revolution of 1989 has been a key reference point in postcommunist era for which it offers a constitutive break from the previous regime.

Revolution and difference in postcommunist politics

- 17 The postcommunist political parties differentiated from each other by their relationship to previous revolutions. Already in 1990 the Hungarian Democratic Forum decided to disassociate itself from Imre Nagy – whom they considered a Socialist, after all. As the leading party of the first postcommunist government, they claimed their revolution was much more of a break than Nagy’s revolution. Imre Nagy’s revolution was commemorated by the state only in 1996 when three memorials for 1956 were erected around the Hungarian parliament under a Socialist-liberal government.
- 18 When the small liberal party Free Democrats joined the landslide-winning Socialists as a junior partner in the government in 1994, revolution seemed to be annulled for many. Socialists were inheritors of the reformist wing of pre-1989 regime. Now they were back in power, to restore Hungarian economy, and many saw liberals as having betrayed their cause. For their most prominent political opponent, Fidesz who took the position of

Democratic Forum as the leading party of the Hungarian right, the socialist era with the previous socialist-led government (1994–98) had just been a rupture in the real community of Hungarian politics: that of right-wing rule.

- 19 In 1998, Viktor Orbán's Fidesz came to power in another landslide. But for the Hungarian left the right-wing rule presented a continuum of interwar authoritarianism or even feudalism, and their campaign in 2002 was to provide a rupture to that. In a tight election campaign 2002, Fidesz lost narrowly to the Socialists, who kept in power for a second term in 2006, but lost control after corruption cases, lies and ailing economy in 2010. This paper deals specifically with the revolutionary rhetoric of Fidesz, and it focuses on their terms in office.

Fidesz and revolution 1989–2006

- 20 Effective mobilisation is one of the important features of Fidesz politics. It has been a populist radical party from its foundations in 1989 to the present. It differed from the other party of the liberal pole of 1990s, Free Democrats in which many of the young politicians' mentors came from. The name of the party was originally Young Democrats' Association where the name FiDeSz comes from, and the membership was limited to those under 30 years. It wanted very strongly to make a distinction between the old elites and themselves. After all, in reform communism such as the regime in Hungary practically everyone was party of the system. Fidesz was a revolutionary anti-system party and they were hugely popular among the youth from the start.
- 21 Since the beginning Fidesz, established in March 1988, they have grounded themselves on the myths of the national revolutions: the system of reference. Viktor Orbán started the speech that gained him national fame at the reburial of Imre Nagy June 1989 stating: "Since the Russian occupation and communist dictatorship started 40 years ago, there has been only once an open chance, only once there was enough courage and strength, for undertake the aims set already in 1848: national independence and political freedom". He also questioned the claims made by politicians to be representing the heritage of Nagy. "No one believes, that the party controlled state would change by itself", he stressed calling for a revolution¹¹.
- 22 Another revolution was set in 1998, when Fidesz had gained the space left by ailing conservative party, Hungarian Democratic Forum, and emerged as the largest party of the right. One of the arguments for Fidesz contesting the democratically elected Socialist-Liberal government's rule in 1998 had been that they are not national enough. The Millennium coincided with the celebrations of thousand years of Hungarian statehood, which was a government sponsored project of quite heavy effort, visibility and budget.
- 23 Fidesz also named the Millennium package after a hero of 1848 revolution, István Széchenyi, who had been named by a commemorative law as the "Greatest Hungarian" and was a moderate progressive figure. Through him, Fidesz rearticulated revolution and made connection between it and the party's own politics. The victory over the left-wing government was seen as a revolution, and a moment of establishment of a new order with a vision of new civic (*polgári*) Hungary, whose roots were in the 19th century reformer Széchenyi's heritage. The notion *polgári* seemed to capture as an empty signifier both moderation, civicness, bourgeoisness, and revolutionary force¹². Thus, in a paradoxical

way in which Fidesz articulated simultaneously their heritage as the bearers of the “Hungarian civic tradition” and the revolutionary flair: ruptures and continuity.

- 24 Statesman-like Viktor Orbán and Fidesz mobilised on the new vision of Hungary, but this seemed to many scary, expensive or too nationalistic, Fidesz lost the elections and had to move to the opposition. The competition was over nationhood, which, as a floating signifier, gained different content from two sides of the political spectrum – ethnic nationhood and outspoken *polgári* Hungarianness on the right and state-bounded nationhood and security on the left.
- 25 Being in the opposition offered Fidesz a perfect ground for returning to their roots: populist confrontation and popular mobilisation. They established village-parliaments, national consultations and collected enough signatures for referenda. Still, they lost the elections in 2006. The aftermath of the elections, however, offered a perfect moment for another revolution. The moment for the revolution presented itself to the opposition and Fidesz after the Socialist Prime Minister Ferencs Gyurcsány admitted to having lied about the budget deficit prior to the general elections. Streets were filled with people calling for the PM to step down. Fidesz saw a possibility for its own mobilisation, and moved on to revolutionary rhetoric. They had a landslide victory in the local elections already in autumn 2006.

Fidesz and “revolution” in 2010

- 26 To some extent, Fidesz mobilised for following general elections in 2010 in the name of revolution. The main opposition party gained a landslide victory, and took the leading position in government in the elections of 2010, first time since 2002. The term revolution was mentioned to characterise the political developments beyond the party usage. For example, the national left-wing daily called it in June a voters’ revolution, referring perhaps to the fact that many of the former left-wing voters did not go to the polls¹³. The victory of Fidesz at the local elections in Autumn 2010 was referred again in October as “the most recent revolution at the urns”¹⁴. To bring flesh to the most recent “revolution”, five speeches have been carefully selected for discourse analysis from Orbán’s online speech archives. Each of these can be considered among the key speeches during the year, and taking an epoch-marking perspective in that they reflect on their era.
- 27 In a speech on the twentieth anniversary of the revolution in Timisoara, Romania on 4 December 2009, Viktor Orbán stressed that there are lessons to be learned from the past twenty years. One of these was the claim that democracy and market do not work on their own – without state or society’s control. The liberal economic position of leaving it all to the invisible hand had been the claim of the left in Hungary, so there was a lot of space on the statist side. Rather than overall change, Orbán argued for moderation: “This knowledge would be the guideline, showing to us what and how we must change after the next elections”¹⁵.
- 28 Ten days later in the Party meeting on the elections, Orbán argued that Jobbik was a Trojan horse claiming to be on the right and the Gyurcsány government had turned its back on the people. This would be the first thing to change: turn towards “people” (*emberek*, rather than nation or Hungarians). Referring to the Hungarian Socialist Party through the previous PM Gyurcsány, Orbán was pointing out to the liar whose name had become notorious. Furthermore, stressing that the Party still had the “Gyurcsány flag”,

he claimed that nothing had changed despite the change of a new leader. Orbán argued that what has been heard in Hungary over the last eight years is “there is no other way” or “cannot do otherwise”. This had to change: “just imagine how should it be heard in Angela Merkel’s Germany or Sarkozy’s France, and how we heard 1989 and prior to our victory in 1998”. It is the time to end the Gyurcsány era, Orbán concluded calling for justice¹⁶.

- 29 In his opening speech of the year 2010 in Budapest Orbán made a long reference to Emerson, Lake and Palmer’s song. In the lengthy speech he still insisted that end should come to the Gyurcsány era. The current affairs cannot go on. He stood against the current form of finance capitalism (pénzkapitalizmus) but also against the “one-way-road” of anticapitalism. The next government should build the economy from a different basis on the values of: work, home, family, and health. He emphasised social security and the love of fellow nationals (following an ethnic conception of the nation). This was not in fact a particularly revolutionary speech but in one thing: changing eras. The reference to ELP of his youth was providing a link to the past in this call for rupture¹⁷.
- 30 In the election speech from after the first round on 11 April 2010, the revolution was much more present. Orbán made a clear and explicit connection to 1956 and 1990. “In 1956 judgement was made on communist dictatorship opting for freedom. In 1956 Hungarians made a judgement on the party-state system and opted for democracy. In 2010 judgement is made upon the failed era, choosing health, order and security”. Orbán went even further: “We wish You do everything you can to make 2010 to follow in the line of the important dates of the Hungarian nation”. This revolution was not about rupture only: it was about continuity¹⁸.
- 31 “Revolution” was on the heading of Orbán’s speech after the elections. The results showed 68 percent support for the Fidesz and Christian Democratic People’s Party electoral coalition. He returned to the idea that the twenty years had been a time for important lessons. The first lesson was that “one cannot change the system; the system can only be overthrown and demolished, demolished for new to be established in its place”. “This is what happened today”. In other words, there was not a system change, as the 1989/90 in Hungary provided, but a revolution, in Orbán’s mind¹⁹.

Revolution as a myth and fantasy

- 32 The understanding of revolution as a radical break which would start a completely new era is contested by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe already in their work from the 1980s²⁰. Those speaking in the name of a revolution only reproduce power relations from another perspective. Thus, what is needed is the assessment of how the revolutionary break is done and signified rearticulating existing points references.
- 33 Laclau in his *New Reflections on Revolutions of Our Time* made a distinction between a “myth” and “imaginary”, as analytical tools to conceptualise meaning-making²¹. Myths are frequent reference points in a shared community, where as imaginary is the overarching horizon – a strong myth which becomes to play role as a reference point to most argumentation in a given community. It fixes the boundaries of a community, the group of those who share the reference point. In the case of Hungary, 1956 emerged in 1989 as an imaginary that everyone shared. It was shattered, however, as its status was questioned. 1848, by contrast still works as an imaginary. On one level, one might argue

that the whole revolutionary tradition – the need to make references to revolutions of the past in the activities that are presented as revolutionary of the present.

- 34 Myths or imaginaries do not exist by themselves, but are products of articulation: to exist they have to be referred to. Hungarian politicians – especially Viktor Orbán, whose speeches have been studied here – have been maintaining the memory and ethos of revolutions in Hungarian public life. The contest from the extreme right Jobbik, the third largest party in Hungary as of 2010, has been that 1989 never was a revolution but the same elites continued what was there before. Each change of government has been a revolution of sorts, changing rapidly and quite drastically policies and personnel. Different political forces – from the Fidesz to the Hungarian Guard and Jobbik – call for a revolution.

Conclusions

- 35 Thinking of revolutions, ruptures and continuities, it is obvious from our case that revolution is not a mere rupture. Revolution is not a sudden unanticipated change, but something that has been built from bottom up mobilisation – otherwise we could talk about a coup, as in Romania in 1989²². It claims to provide a change, but there will always be legacies of the past that continue in the time to follow. Rather, it is an ideal that has roots and precedence. In the case of Hungary, any revolution seems to have been deeply rooted in the previous revolutionary experiences. Therefore, it presents rather a continuity than a mere rupture. Each revolution is tied to a chain of previous and subsequent revolutions. Revolution loses its singularity, even as it is named a revolution and related to similar events in this category²³.
- 36 If revolution was a total or totalising change, the previous reference points would be radically altered. The relationships between signifiers and signifieds, structures between elements that make up meaning would be broken. Such a stark dislocation would imply a chaotic situation, which is unsustainable. After the revolution meanings would be fixed anew. In the conditions of often reoccurring “revolutions”, change – or even overthrowing and demolishing – becomes the habitual rather than exceptional. The concept of revolution becomes devaluated.

NOTES

1. See Ernesto LACLAU and Chantal MOUFFE, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, London, Verso, 1985; Ernesto LACLAU, *On Populist Reason*, London, Verso, 2005; Jason GLYNOS and David HOWARTH, *Logics in Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2007.
2. Emilia PALONEN, “Articulating the frontier in Hungarian politics: Budapest Mayor Demszky on 15 March”, *Central European Political Science Review*, vol. 20, 2005, p. 140-165. See also on politics and commemoration, Emilia PALONEN, “Constructing Communities: Politics of the postcommunist city-text of Budapest”, *Tr@nsit Online*, 30, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, 2006, http://www.iwm.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=327&Itemid=334.

3. Cf. history consciousness and myths: Mária VÁSÁRHELYI, *Csalóka emlékezet; A 20. század történelme a magyar közgondolkodásban*, Pozsony (Bratislava), Kalligram, 2007; Ignác ROMSICS (ed.), *Mítoszok, legendák, tévhitek a 20. századi Magyar történelemről*, Budapest, Osiris, 2001; Gábor EGRY, *Otthonosság és idegenség; Identitáspolitikai és nemzetfelfogás Magyarországon a rendszerváltás óta*, Budapest, Napvilág, 2010.
4. Jacques DERRIDA, *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1967.
5. David HOWARTH, *Discourse*, Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press, 2000.
6. Ernesto LACLAU, *Emancipation(s)*, London, Verso, 1996.
7. Ernesto LACLAU, *On Populist Reason*, op. cit. p. 130-131.
8. Timothy GARTON ASH, *The Magic Lantern: the Revolution of 1989*, New York, Vintage, 1990.
9. George SCHÖPFLIN, *Nations, Identity, Power; The New Politics of Europe*, London, Hurst & Company, 2000, p. 386.
10. Emilia PALONEN, "The city-text in post-communist Budapest: street names, memorials, and the politics of commemoration", *Geojournal*, Vol. 73, No. 3, November 2008, p. 219-230.
11. Viktor ORBÁN, "Speech at the reburial of Imre Nagy", 16.6.1989, <http://www.fidesz.hu/index.php?Cikk=116287>.
12. Brigid FOWLER, "Concentrated Orange: Fidesz and the Remaking of the Hungarian Centre-Right, 1994-2002", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 3, September 2004; Emilia PALONEN, "Political Polarisation and Populism in Contemporary Hungary", *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 2009, p. 318-334.
13. Károly LENCSE, "A Fidesz garantálta: ôsszel golytatódhat a voksoló forradalom", *Népszabadság Online*, 22.6.2010.
14. Anonymous, "Újabb urnás forradalom - szinte mindenütt Fidesz-KDNP győzelem" (Most recent revolution at the urns - Fidesz-KDNP wins almost everywhere), *Gondola.hu/MTI*, 3.10.2010, http://www.gondola.hu/cikkek/73298-Ujabb_urnas_forradalom_-_szinte_mindenutt_Fidesz-KDNP_gyozelem.html.
15. Viktor ORBÁN, "Az elmúlt húsz évben sokat tanultunk' tanultunk" (We learned a lot over the past twenty years), *Timisoara*, 4.12.2009, http://2007-2010.orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek_list.php?item=107.
16. Viktor ORBÁN, "Együtt az emberekkel" (Together with the people), Speech at the national electoral council of Fidesz (választmány), 14.12.2009, http://2007-2010.orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek_list.php?item=108.
17. Viktor ORBÁN, "Újjá kell építeni Magyarországot' beszéde éértékelő beszéde" (Hungary must be rebuilt), február 5-én hangzott el Budapesten, 5.2.2010, http://2007-2010.orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek_list.php?item=112.
18. Viktor ORBÁN, "Forradalom történt a szavazófülkékben" (Revolution takes place in the election cabins), Vörösmarty tér, Budapest, 25.4.2010, http://orbanviktor.hu/beszed/forradalom_tortent_a_szavazofulkeekben.
19. Viktor ORBÁN, "Magyarország polgárai legyőzték a reménytelenséget" (Hungarian citizen defeated despondency, Speech post-election press conference, Budapest, 11.4.2010, http://orbanviktor.hu/beszed/magyarorszag_polgarai_legyoztek_a_remenytelenseget.
20. Ernesto LACLAU and Chantal MOUFFE, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, op. cit.
21. Ernesto LACLAU, *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time*, London, Verso, 1990, p. 60-67.
22. Peter SIANI-DAVIES, "Romanian revolution or coup d'Etat? : A theoretical view of the events of December 1989", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 29, No 4, 1996, p. 453-465.
23. Laclau stresses that in fact, the distinction between pure universality and pure particularism is a mere ideal, but rather one should consider relationship between universality and particularity a paradox where one is reliant on the other.

ABSTRACTS

Le concept de révolution joue un rôle important dans la vie politique hongroise, qu'il traduise un sentiment de continuité ou de rupture. L'écriture de l'histoire de la Hongrie s'est opérée en mettant l'accent sur l'idée d'un continuum historique entrecoupé de révolutions. Ce sont ces dernières que les élites politiques parvenues au pouvoir ont interprété tour à tour à leur façon. Ainsi, la victoire électorale éclatante du parti Fidesz au printemps 2010 – qui lui a donné une majorité parlementaire historique lui offrant même la possibilité d'effectuer des révisions constitutionnelles – a été bâtie sur l'idée de « révolution » puis nommée rétrospectivement comme telle. En adoptant une approche théorique du discours inspirée par le travail d'Ernesto Laclau, cette communication entend montrer comment le concept de « révolution » a agi dans la vie politique hongroise à la fois comme un signifiant diffus (« a floating signifier » selon la terminologie de Laclau) et un mythe. La révolution se voit ainsi attribuer de nouveaux sens et est renvoyée à différents contextes afin de légitimer le changement tout en entretenant l'illusion de la continuité avec la tradition politique nationale – tandis qu'elle formule cette tradition elle-même. En définitive, il s'agit d'aborder le paradoxe selon lequel, dans ces circonstances, une révolution est considérée comme une rupture.

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Mots-clés: floating-signifier, Hongrie, Laclau, nation, Révolution, rupture, théorie du discours

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